The acquisition of the Dutch quantitative pronoun ER
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Citation for published version (APA):

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The acquisition of the Dutch quantitative pronoun ER: the role of background language(s)

Sanne Berends  Petra Sleeman  Aafke Hulk  Jeannette Schaeffer

Introduction

This study looks at transfer from L1 French and L1 English to the L2 Dutch. We specifically look at the ability to judge and imitate morpho-syntactic and semantic structures with the quantitative pronoun ER.

Logical Transfer models (e.g. Fully Transfer/Full Access) vs. Deriving Transfer (e.g. Partial Transfer) predict that ER will only be present if the L1 has a similar structure. Partial Transfer predicts that ER will only be partially present (e.g. complex NP modified by a cardinal numeral or weak quantifier. The L1 French group English too, and since all participants live in The Netherlands they come into contact with English on a regular basis. This leads to the idea that Dutch is in fact their L3.

Discussion

• Our predictions were based on Dutch being the L2 for both groups. However, all of the L1 French participants speak English too, and since all participants live in The Netherlands they come into contact with English on a regular basis. This leads to the idea that Dutch is in fact their L3.

• By considering Dutch as an L3 for the L1 French group, we implemented the L2 Status Factor (Bardel and Falk 2007) that claims that the L2 acts as a filter, thereby blocking transfer from the L1 at the syntactic level. Thus, the L2 might have a bigger impact on learning the L3 than the L1. In that case we do not expect to find significant differences between the L1 French and the L1 English groups.

• No significant difference between the L1 French and L1 English groups have been found in the GJT, thereby confirming the L2 Status Factor.

Materials

• Grammaticality Judgement Task
  3 experimental conditions (N=30), 15 fillers
• Sentence Imitation Task
  3 experimental conditions (N=12), 8 fillers
• Dutch Vocabulary Task, Digit Span, Questionnaire

Comparison results French-Dutch and English-Dutch

In the SI the L1 English speakers behaved as we expected, however the L1 French speakers did not: apparently they behave just like the L1 English speakers.

Comparison results French-English

In the GJT the L1 French seems to have an influence on L2 Dutch, like we expected, BUT a comparison between the L1 French and the L1 English speakers also shows that the L2 French speakers behave exactly the same as the L1 English speakers.

Participants

L1 French (N=25), highly advanced, level > B2
L1 English (N=25), highly advanced, level > B2
L1 Dutch (N=25)

Average years of exposure: L1 French (22.1): L1 English (19.7)

Table 1: Comparison results French-Dutch and English-Dutch

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SI</th>
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<th>L1 English</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>negative</strong></td>
<td><strong>negative</strong></td>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>negative</strong></td>
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5/6 predictions confirmed
5/6 predictions confirmed

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References and Acknowledgements


We would like to thank Tom Rooper and Jason Rothman for their useful comments and discussion on this research.